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# BOTANICAL GAZETTE

NOVEMBER, 1892.

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## The International Congress at Genoa.

LUCIEN M. UNDERWOOD.

It may not be without interest to the botanists of America to know something of the Botanical Congress which assembled in Genoa September 4–11. In fact I feel it my duty to my colleagues, who conferred on me the honor of being their representative, to give at this earliest possible opportunity a somewhat detailed account of the meeting and its results. I will present here some of the general items of the journey, reserving for another place<sup>1</sup> an account of the discussion of the nomenclature problem.

A trip to Europe cannot properly be arranged for with two days notice. Yet my appointment as delegate from the Botanical Club of the A. A. A. S. was made on Monday, August 22d, and as the Congress opened Sunday, September 4th, my only chance of reaching Genoa at the opening session was to sail from New York Wednesday, August 24th, by the *Majestic* of the White Star Line. Returning by the first available steamer (on account of the present crowded condition of travel) I was even then over three weeks late with my lectures. It will thus be seen that the trip has been taken with some inconvenience to myself and sacrifice on the part of others.

At New York I met Dr. Vasey, who represented the Smithsonian Institution, and we proceeded together to Genoa, remained together most of the time, and returned together. We reached Genoa from Liverpool by the shortest route (*via* Mont Cenis) just after dark on Saturday, September 3d.

The opening reception at Genoa was held at the grand hall of the Municipio, and was, like all the receptions, decidedly informal. A few at the opening session of the Congress on the following day, mistaking the occasion, appeared in full

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<sup>1</sup>This paper, bearing even date with the present, I send to the *Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club*.

dress, but after maintaining a self-appointed conspicuity for a single session, reappeared in the afternoon clothed and in their right minds.

The moving spirit in the management of the Congress was Professor Penzig. In his capacity of general secretary he was the life of the entire Congress. Readily speaking four languages, of infinite patience, always cheerful, and even at times overflowing with good spirits, he conducted the affairs of the Congress in a manner that won him the admiration of every one in attendance. His tall gaunt form was everywhere, making strangers at home, answering the multitudinous detail of annoying questions, now attending to routine, now reading papers before the Congress, now carrying out the complicated business details of the excursions, unruffled, ubiquitous, urbane—the very soul of good nature, and a prince in management.

While the official language of the Congress was Italian, none of the presiding officers used it, and it would be difficult to say whether Italian, French or German predominated; in the heat of discussion the polyglot approximated the Babel of tongues. The soft, rhythmic cadences of the expressive Italian were followed by the earnest but often harsh tones of the deep, soul-stirring German; the suave nasals of the polished French succeeded the blunt but copious and effective English. Never were we more happily disappointed in the apparent strength of a spoken language, as compared with its seemingly weak terminations in print, than we were in listening to the Italian. Never were we so impressed with the necessity of a common language for scientific intercourse; never more convinced that English will ultimately be that chosen language.

At the opening of the scientific sessions which were held in the grand hall of the University<sup>2</sup> Thomas Hanbury was made the honorary president of the sessions. There were thirty-six vice presidents of whom Ascherson, Burnat, Bonnet, Borodin, Chodat, Durand, Haussknecht, Kny, Magnus, Mag-nin, Moore, Prantl, Pfitzer, Radlkofer, Strasburger, Under-wood, Vasey, Vilmorin, Marshall-Ward and Wright were present. The ballot among the vice presidents for the first

<sup>2</sup>Founded as a Jesuit College, 1623; university organization established in 1812.

presiding officer led to a very close count between Penzig and Strasburger, the latter attaining the position by a majority of one. The further sessions were presided over in order by Vasey, Vilmorin, Borodin, Marshall-Ward, Burnat, and Durand, each using his native speech except Strasburger and Borodin who used French.

The number of delegates in actual attendance is a difficult question to determine. A list of members of the Congress was published and early distributed, but this included several who had expected to be present but were unfortunately detained. Of the 196 names published in the list we know of at least 28 who were not present; among these were Cohn, von Thümen, Brefeld, N. L. Britton, Bailey-Balfour, Malinvaud and Thistleton-Dyer.

The members of the list (of whom we personally met 62) were divided among the various nationalities as follows: Italy 108, Germany 25, France 13, Great Britain 12 (of whom only six were present), Austro-Hungary 9, United States 6 (of whom three were present), Switzerland 4, Belgium 3, Scandinavia 3 (of whom only one was present), Russia, Spain and Turkey each one. Ten others were distributed from Mexico and Cuba to Mauritius and New Zealand, but none of these were present. The actual attendance, limited mainly to members of the Congress, probably ranged from 100 to 150. Among the better known Italian botanists present were Penzig, Saccardo, Massalongo, De Toni, Arcangeli, Berlese, Caruel, Cavara, Delpino, St. Sommier, Martelli, and others. Among the Germans were Ascherson, Kny, Klein, Magnus, Prantl, Pfitzer, Radlkofer, Strasburger, and Haussknecht. Vilmorin, Burnat and Bonnet represented France; Chodat, Switzerland; Durand, Belgium; and Borodin, Russia. Marshall-Ward was the leader of the British delegation which was equally divided between the English and Irish botanists. In addition to Dr. Vasey and myself, America was represented by Prof. Henrietta Hooker of Mt. Holyoke College, the only educational institution that sent a delegate to the Congress. Mt. Holyoke was further represented by two of the graduates from its botanical laboratory, Miss Catharine Barbour, of San Sebastian, Spain, and Miss Arma Smith, of Constantinople, who are pioneer botanical missionaries from the new world to the botanically less-known regions of the old, and

are carrying American methods to the slower and more conservative nations of Europe.

Each delegate was presented with a card of membership and an elaborate button-hole badge with the inscription "Congresso Internazionale Botanico Genova 1892" in black letters on a gilt border, and with the arms of Genoa, including the red cross of Savoy, in gilt on a white field.<sup>3</sup> We were also given a guide to Genoa which was a special edition of a well known German guide<sup>4</sup> bound, with coupons and stubs for our various excursions and entertainments, in a special board cover labeled in true German style "Congresso Botanico Internazionale."

The session of Monday forenoon was given up largely to the formalities of opening the Congress, the addresses of welcome by Arcangeli, President of the *Societa Botanica Italiana*, and others, the election of presiding officer for the afternoon session, the greeting from Strasburger, presiding officer elect, and general notices for the sessions and excursions. On Monday afternoon the reading of papers was taken up, commencing with one by Strasburger "Ueber Schwärmsporen, Gameten, Spermatozoiden und die Befruchtung," followed by others by Saccardo, Massalongo, and Arcangeli. Opportunity for discussion was given after each paper and some elicited considerable spirit and enthusiasm. During the congress forty-three papers were read by thirty-two persons. Of these papers twenty-five were by Italians, seven by French, six by Germans, two by Swiss, two by Russian and one by Belgian botanists, covering a wide range as will be seen from a few selected topics: "Sopra alcuni entomocecidi Italiani." "Sur l'électricité statique et son action sur la vegetation." "Zur physiologischen Bedeutung des Anthocyans." "Sur les dépôts diffus d'oxalate de chaux dans les feuilles." "Zum Schutz des Edelweiss." "Note teratologiche sui fiori di alcune Orchidee indigene." "Ricerche sul nucleo e le cellule sessuali presso le piante crittogene."

On Tuesday morning the Hanbury Botanical Institute was formally dedicated. This was a gift from Mr. Thomas Hanbury of Mortola to the University of Genoa and completes a

<sup>3</sup>Our own Botanical Section might well take an idea from this and provide a permanent badge that could be worn at the A. A. A. S. meetings each year in place of the curling ribbons.

<sup>4</sup>Bruckmann, Villes et paysages du monde entier. No. 18, Munich.

very superior equipment for purposes of botanical instruction and research. Genoa "la superba," forms a crescent about the harbor and extends up the steep slopes of the foot hills that come down almost to the sea. From the upper story of the University one goes across a passage-way to the lower terraces of an extensive botanic garden where a diverse collection of plants has long been under cultivation. Passing to the upper terraces of the garden we come finally to a broad plateau, whence one can look over the blue Mediterranean and along the olive-crowned slopes of the Ligurian coast, hazy in the mellow Italian sunshine. On this plateau is the Hanbury Institute, now presided over by Professor Penzig, the able successor of Guiseppe De Notaris. Mr. Hanbury, a wealthy Englishman who spends his winters at his extensive Italian garden, has liberally endowed this institute and equipped its laboratories for anatomical and physiological work and has greatly extended its herbarium and enlarged its museum, making it in every respect a model for botanical instruction. The exercises were simple but impressive and ended with the unveiling of an admirable and life-like bronze of Mr. Hanbury. Following these exercises the Congress was twice grouped in the garden and photographed. The afternoon session of Tuesday was presided over by Dr. Vasey, who opened with a graceful speech in which, as the representative from the Smithsonian Institution, he touchingly alluded to the grave of Smithson in the English cemetery just outside the city of Genoa, and briefly set forth the present state of botanical research and development in America. Then followed Professor Ascherson's paper, "Sur la reforme de la nomenclature botanique," in which he presented essentially the substance of his recently published paper.<sup>5</sup> After this we presented the Rochester platform and the remainder of the session was taken up with the discussion of the nomenclature problem, ending with the approval of I, II and III of the Berlin propositions with the substitution in the first of the date 1753 for both genera and species, and the appointment of a standing committee to whom all other nomenclatural problems were to be referred.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Berichte der deutschen botanischen Gesellschaft, x, 327-359.

<sup>6</sup> As some who read this may not see the full account in the *Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club*, it may be well to add here that the American members of this committee are Dr. Britton, of New York, Dr. J. M. Coulter, of Indiana, and Prof. Greene, of California.

Wednesday was given up to a most enjoyable excursion, first by sea to Portofino, then by carriages to Santa Margherita, where a reception with wine and lunch was furnished in the Municipio, after which we were taken to the Gran Hotel on the hill overlooking the sea, where an elaborate collation was served, after which toasts were drank and responded to in truly continental style. The carriages then took us to Rapallo, where we were again wined, and mutual toasts were indulged in at the Municipio by the city officials and the visiting guests. We then proceeded to Recco, where we were obliged to decline a third entertainment for lack of time. From Recco we took the train to Genoa. The country at this time seemed dry, and botanically uninteresting, in landscape, haze and vegetation reminding one of central California during the dry season. A few straggling spermatophytes were in flower by the wayside, a *Selaginella* grew in profusion in a damp ditch, two or three ferns, mostly shriveled by the drought, appeared on the walls which bordered the streets; among them we recognized *Asplenium trichomanes*, *Ceterach officinarum* and *Adiantum capillus-veneris*, the latter more common at the watering places, where a few hepaticas also maintained a doubtful existence. On shaded walls were a few mosses, and under the chestnut trees two or three agarics and boleti were growing. Orchards and vineyards, olive groves and chestnut trees made up the bulk of the cultivated vegetation, though oaks, poplars and chestnuts served for shade trees, and some lemons were in cultivation in gardens. The hills were bare of native forests, the harvest was mainly gathered and the soft haze of the golden sunshine betokened the beginning of the season of rest.

On Thursday morning the reading of papers was resumed. While giving the daily notices Prof. Penzig announced the gift to the Institute of an elaborate two-volume folio of illustrations of the plants of the region drawn and colored by hand by a Capuchin monk, who was present *in propria persona* and rose while the notice was being given. As King Humbert and Queen Margherita made a visit to Genoa and the Columbian exposition during the week of the Congress, Thursday afternoon, on which the king arrived by sea, was given up to the royal festivities. The vice-presidents were

further honored by invitations to the royal ball, which was held on Friday night.

As the Palazzo Reale was almost opposite the university, the sessions of Friday were somewhat interrupted by the clamors of the people in the narrow street for the recognition of the king. The day was almost wholly given up to the completion of the papers of the printed program, several of which were read only in abstract; some routine work of committees was attended to, and Prof. Penzig presented each visiting delegate with a representative and carefully selected fascicle of the flora of upper Italy, neatly prepared and marked in silvered letters:

Congresso Internazionale Botanico,

Genova,

1892.

O. PENZIG.

Selectæ Stirpes Liguriæ.

On Saturday an excursion was taken to Ventimiglia, a city of the Mediterranean coast, not far from Nice, and thence to Mortola, where Mr. Hanbury owns one of the most elaborate private gardens of the whole Mediterranean region. This over, the Congress was informally adjourned.

Were we called upon to suggest any changes of program or method for a gathering of botanists even more successful than this, we would say (1) reduce the number of papers read, (2) introduce a few topics for discussion that would command universal attention, (3) increase the facilities for personal and social intercourse among the members. The grand object of such a meeting is to facilitate the personal acquaintance of members and the discussion of questions of general interest, rather than stiff formality and the presentation and discussion of local questions. Every effort to secure these two ends should be most carefully studied.

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